



June 11, 2020

Representative Marvin Abney
Chairman, House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: In Support of H7246

Dear Chairman Abney,

On behalf of the Housing Network of Rhode Island and Community Development Corporations across the state, I write in strong support of H7246, proposed legislation that seeks to repeal the sunset provision on the Rhode Island Historic Tax Credit Program.

The Housing Network of Rhode Island is the state association of non-profit housing developers and community development corporations. Our membership has created thousands of affordable housing opportunities statewide and are leaders within their communities, working to revitalize neighborhoods and stimulate economic development. Our members are developing properties that fit within their respective communities, creating affordable rental units and first time homebuyer opportunities. Their efforts to revive abandoned and underutilized properties and revitalize blighted neighborhoods increase the municipal tax base and help to strengthen the neighborhoods where they are located.

Given the age of Rhode Island's housing and building infrastructure, there are often opportunities to re-develop historic properties but are exceptionally difficult to finance. The Rhode Island Historic Tax Credit Program is a valuable resource in this re-development work to ensure that important historic architectural elements are preserved.

Since its establishment in 2002, the Rhode Island Historic Tax Credit Program has been used to complete the rehabilitation of hundreds of underutilized historic buildings, representing approximately \$1.7 billion in private investment. In five year period, 62 projects were completed using this resource with over \$224 million in combined qualified rehabilitation expenditures. There are currently still dozens of projects in the pipeline that could receive funding if the currently scheduled sunset provision were repealed. A June 30, 2020 expiration means that there would not be enough time to see any of these important projects come to fruition or the hundreds of millions of dollars in investment that those projects represent come into the RI economy. H7246 seeks to preserve a well-vetted and high performing program that is critical resource to the work of historic preservation.

For all of these reasons, we strongly support H7246 and urge the Committee to approve this proposed legislation. I welcome any questions from the Committee and can be reached at 721-5680 ext. 38

Respectfully submitted,

Melina Lodge
Executive Director